

# COALITION OF CONNECTICUT SPORTSMEN

P.O. Box 2506, Hartford, CT 06146, (203) 245-8076

[www.ctsportsmen.com](http://www.ctsportsmen.com) [ccsct@erols.com](mailto:ccsct@erols.com)

Testimony presented to the **Environment Committee**, by Robert T. Crook, Director. 03/09/09

**In OPPOSITION to S.B. No. 994 (RAISED). AN ACT CONCERNING LEGHOLD TRAPS  
In SUPPORT of H.B. No. 6553 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SUNDAY HUNTING**

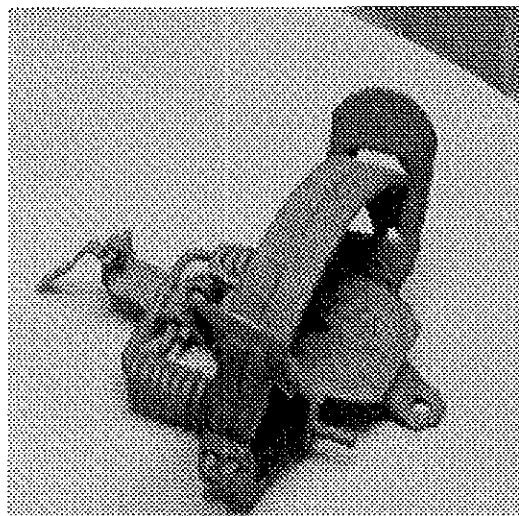
Today you address two VERY important issues – Trapping and Sunday Hunting! Both deal with wildlife management. You either believe in Science conducted by DEP wildlife biologists using the best tools available to harvest a renewable natural resource maintaining balanced populations, preclude disease “boom & bust cycles”, and lessen property damage; OR you take the Emotional approach, contrary to science “leave the animals alone, let nature take its course,” and promote there are/will be no problems concerning the biological health of the wildlife population or public safety/public health/property damage societal concerns.

**Ban the Leghold (Foothold) Trap bills/amendments have been submitted repeatedly since 1927 (80+ years). Why hasn't it passed?**

- Most Legislators have recognized the principles and requirements of wildlife management.
- In order to harvest, a tool or tools are needed. Use of footholds and Conibears conforms to the International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Best Management Practices (BMP), a 15 year, multi-million dollar scientific study of traps [http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer\\_resources.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html) [http://www.fishwildlife.org/Furbearer/Aug%202006%20BMPs/Introduction\\_comp.pdf](http://www.fishwildlife.org/Furbearer/Aug%202006%20BMPs/Introduction_comp.pdf) to establish humane standards. This was requested by the European Union and affected the export of wild fur from the US and Canada. All traps, current and new, were evaluated as to damage to the animals and evaluated by veterinary professionals. All furbearer species and associated traps have been completed and results implemented by wildlife agencies
- Regulated Trapping in CT is among the strictest in the nation. The regulations concerning use of both foothold and Conibear traps address limited seasons, how, when, & where the traps can be set, names on traps, Mandatory education requirements, Mandatory landowner permission, and a Mandatory 24 hour trap check.
- Banning the foothold and Conibear traps is to prohibit the most effective management tools. Foothold traps are those most used by wildlife biologists to trap target animals alive and unharmed (Bald Eagles, Canada Lynx, River Otter) in the conduct of studies.
- Animal rightists offer NO viable trap substitutes, based upon their position that Any harvest of wildlife including hunting, and fishing is an anathema.
- Anti-trapping groups have always Opposed any beneficial trap improvement or procedures (Mandatory education, Padded Jaw traps, Special Coyote control, etc.) regardless of the benefit to wildlife and society. Conversely, DEP & Trappers promote common-sense – use the best tools available.
- Bans don't work and are always subject to unintentional consequences. An excellent example is the MA trap ban which cost the state, towns and public millions in road, sewerage, property damage by Beavers.

We also have significant problems with the alleged trapping of the Owl. We urge you to read the DEP Incident Report and evaluate the intent and demeanor of the Complainant. Her statement, “determined to have (trapping) steel traps banned from CT,” multiple times, “and that this case could help her”; refusal to allow the investigating officer to see or secure the trap as evidence, that she was “going to handle the investigation”; and that she now “had the media involved”, may indicate more than is in the report.

The trapping of the Owl was clearly an illegal act, if in fact it was trapped. The trap is rusted and has no chain - not a trapper's. There is No name tag attached, No written permission on the land, No special permission for land trapping - All Illegal. **The trap cannot be set due to the bent Dog** (see below)! How did the Owl's foot get into an inoperable trap? Was the Owl placed in the trap? On who's part?? Is this a "SET -UP" to promote this type legislation?



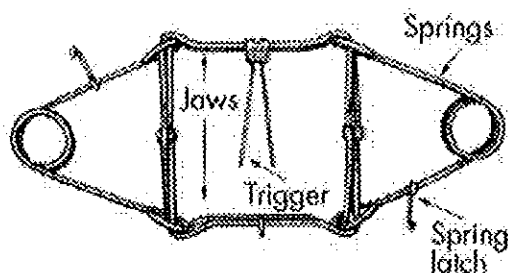
**Figure 17.** level pan

**Evidence Trap: No chain, bent Dog, severely rusted. (Picture from the HSUS website)**

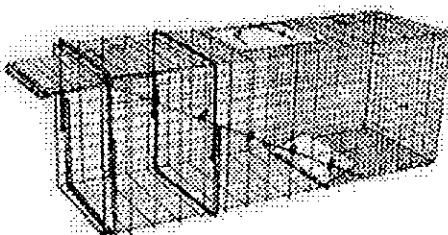
Today we'll also hear emotional personal opinion or anecdotal reports, of "various reports of CT cats, dogs and an occasional kid are caught in the traps" and "there are many other devices more humane that trappers could use." We suggest when you hear these reports/opinions you ask for documentation of the type and number of reported incidents-otherwise reject them as fantasy. Consult the DEP ENCON Police for their Annual Report and citizen TIP reports to determine the incidence of trapping violations and alleged non-target catch reports. As with many bills, emotional input sometimes rules over fact. We urge you to address THE FACTS and reject this trapping proposal as in the past.

Thank you.

## Trap types:



**Figure 5.** Standard body-gripping trap



**Figure 6.** Cage trapping system

12x12x30" -\$50

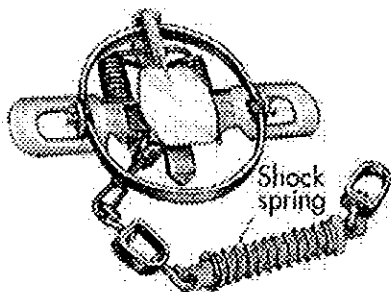


Figure 9. In-line shock spring

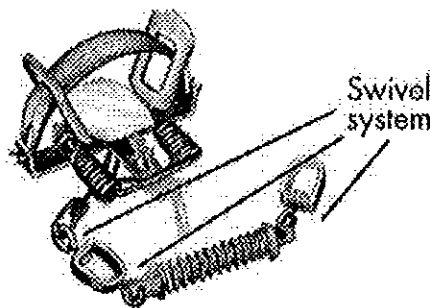


Figure 7a. Foothold trap

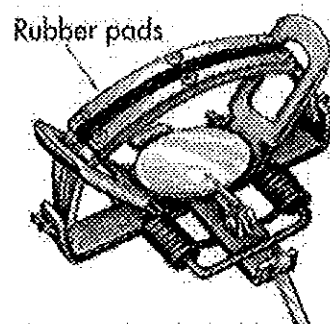
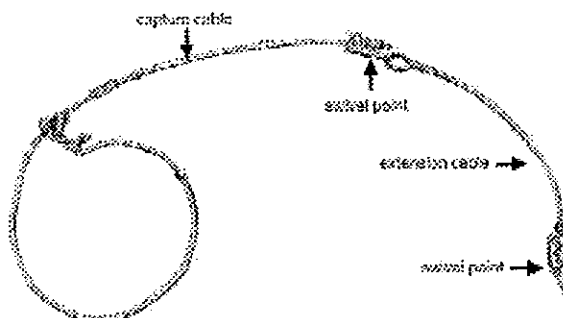
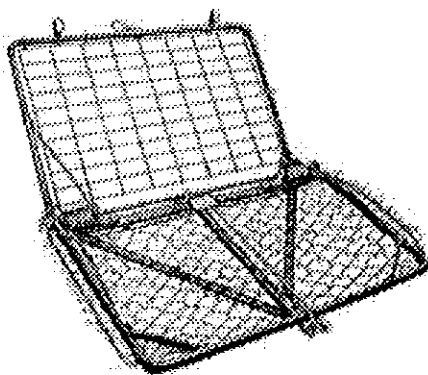


Figure 13. Padded jaws



"Suitcase" Cage Traps Length open/closed: 39 inches/Weight: 33 pounds/Cost \$342

Snare Illegal in CT

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## Furbearer Trapping Seasons and Regulations (Bold/Underline Ours)

### 2009 HUNTING AND TRAPPING FIELD GUIDE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WILDLIFE DIVISION ***FURBEARER TRAPPING SEASONS***

SPECIES	DATES	LIMITS
River Otter*	Jan. 1 - Mar. 15 & Nov. 8 - Dec. 31	8
Beaver*	Jan. 1 - Mar. 15 & Dec. 1 - Dec. 31	25
Mink*, Muskrat, Weasel, Coyote*, Gray Fox*, Red Fox*, Raccoon, Opossum, and Skunk	Jan. 1 - Mar. 15 & Nov. 8 - Dec. 31	No Limits
Fisher*	Nov. 8 - Nov. 30	2

*\*ALL BEAVER, RIVER OTTER, RED FOX, GRAY FOX, WILD MINK, COYOTE AND FISHER PELTS must be properly tagged before they are sold, exchanged, given away, otherwise disposed of, or retained for personal use. These pelts must be tagged by the last scheduled tagging date of the season. Fur dealers are prohibited from buying or selling untagged pelts of these species. All pelts of these species, whether hunted or trapped, must be tagged.*

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## 2009 PELT TAGGING SCHEDULE

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### Location

**Southford Falls State Park**

Rte. 188, Oxford

**Sessions Woods WMA**

Rte. 69, Burlington

**Natchaug Forest Hdqtrs.**

Kingsbury Rd., Eastford

**Franklin WMA**

Rte. 32, Franklin

### 2009 Dates

**Mar. 28, Saturday**

**Jan. 24, Saturday**

**Mar. 29, Sunday**

**Dec. 19, Saturday**

**Jan. 25, Sunday**

**Mar. 29, Sunday**

**Dec. 20, Sunday**

Pelts will be tagged (at no cost) by DEP representatives between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon at the locations and dates listed above.

### COYOTE LAND TRAPPING

**From December 1 through January 31 there are special provisions for trapping coyotes on private land.**

Refer to PADDED METAL TRAP RESTRICTIONS for the requirements that must be met to trap coyotes on private land during this time period.

### TAXIDERMISTS

Taxidermists can accept untagged animals or pelts, but are required to have them tagged by the next scheduled tagging date. Taxidermists must attach a paper tag to the animal or pelt listing the hunter or trapper's name, license number, town of harvest and date of harvest.

### PELTS OF PROTECTED SPECIES

Any skin, pelt, or carcass of protected species, including Bobcat and Black Bear, may not be sold, purchased, or possessed unless:

It was legally acquired AND, In addition to any tag required by any other state or country, affixed with a separate tag bearing the following information:

Date acquired.

Name and address of the person from whom it was acquired.

Hunting or trapping license number under which it was harvested (if applicable).

State and/or country from which it was acquired.

### CARCASS COLLECTIONS

**Wildlife biologists are collecting carcasses of RIVER OTTER, FISHER and WEASELS to determine the age structure and productivity of their populations.** If you harvest river otters, fishers or weasels, you are urged to turn the carcasses in at pelt tagging stations or to call the Wildlife Division at (860)675-8130 to arrange a pick-up.

### STATE LAND TRAPPING

Permits for trapping on selected state-owned land can be purchased for \$60.00 per parcel. Information on applying for permits, applicant requirements, and available properties can be obtained by contacting the Sessions Woods WMA (860-675-8130).

### LEGAL TRAPS AND METHODS

Furbearing animals for which there is an open trapping season may be taken by **Box Traps, Live Traps, Deadfalls, Padded and Unpadded Metal Traps, Smooth Wire Traps, and Species Specific Traps** subject to the following restrictions.

### **UNPADDED METAL TRAP RESTRICTIONS**

May only be used below the surface of the water in a pond, lake, stream, spring hole, or tidal water.

Opening greater than 5 3/4" is prohibited, except that traps with an opening of up to 7 1/2" may be set for beaver in waters frequented by beaver.

### **PADDED METAL TRAP RESTRICTIONS**

May only be used in the burrow of a wild animal or below the surface of the water in a pond, lake, stream, spring hole, or tidal water. Except that, any person who has completed a DEP approved special land trapping course may use padded metal traps on or below ground from December 1 through January 31 for the taking of coyotes on private land parcels of at least 10 contiguous acres where the landowner has given written permission explicitly for the use of such traps. When trapping coyotes in this manner, no visible bait may be used, pan tension must be two pounds or greater, and traps must be securely anchored to the ground.

Opening greater than 5 15/16" is prohibited, except that traps with an opening of up to 7 1/2" may be set for beaver in waters frequented by beaver.

### **SMOOTH WIRE TRAP RESTRICTIONS**

May only be used below the surface of the water in a pond, lake, stream, spring hole, or tidal water.

Except, smooth wire traps having an opening of 4 3/4" or less may extend above the surface of the water provided a portion of the trap frame remains in contact with the water.

Opening greater than 6 1/2" is prohibited, except that Conibears and similar smooth wire traps with an opening of up to 10" may be set for beaver in waters frequented by beaver.

### **THE FOLLOWING ARE PROHIBITED:**

The use of any type of snare.

Traps placed, set, or tended within 10 feet of the waterline of a muskrat or beaver house, including bank beaver.

Traps with serrations or teeth.

### **TRAPPERS ARE REQUIRED TO:**

Attach their name legibly to all traps.

Obtain, and have in possession, the written permission of the landowner when trapping on their land.

WRITTEN PERMISSION MUST BE RENEWED ANNUALLY.

Tend all traps within a 24-hour period.

### **TRAP DEFINITIONS**

**Padded Metal Trap:** A legal padded metal trap has all of the following features or characteristics:

Spring strength not exceeding 55 inch pounds with arms closed and 85 inch pounds with arms in the open position;

A gap between the arms of the trap in the closed position no less than 1/4 inch in width and no less than 4 inches in length;

Replaceable non-weather hardening, non-age hardening padding material not less than 3/32 inch thick covering the closing surfaces and securely affixed to the arms of the trap;

A chain no longer than 6 inches in length;

Swivels located at each end of the chain, and;

A shock absorbing spring incorporated into the anchoring chain.

**Species Specific Trap:** A legal species specific trap has all of the following features or characteristics:

Triggering and restraining mechanisms enclosed by a housing;

When set, triggering and restraining mechanism accessible only via a single opening;

An access opening measuring not greater than 2 inches in diameter or diagonally;

A triggering mechanism that can only be activated by a pulling force;

A swivel-mounted anchoring mechanism.

### **RABIES: What Hunters and Trappers Should Know**

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus affecting the central nervous system. Left untreated, rabies is almost always fatal.

Rabies is primarily transmitted through the bite of an infected animal, however, people may also be exposed by being scratched by a rabid animal or getting an animal's saliva into an open wound or mucous membrane (eyes, nose, or mouth).

Only mammals get rabies; birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians do not. Raccoons, skunks, bats, foxes, dogs, cats and some farm animals are most likely to get rabies. Rabbits, opossums, squirrels, rats, and mice are seldom affected.

**An epidemic of raccoon rabies reached Connecticut in March 1991. Since then rabies has infected thousands of raccoons. Cases in non-raccoon species, including dogs, cats, skunks, foxes and woodchucks have also been reported.**